DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 297 204 CG 020 977

AUTHOR Steffenhagen, R. A.
TITLE Self-Esteem: A Model.
PUB DATE Aug 87
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (95th, New York, NY, August 28-September 1, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - General (140) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Models; *Psychology; *Self Concept Measures; *Self Esteem; *Theories
IDENTIFIERS Adler (Alfred)

ABSTRACT

Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology theory is actually a theory of self-esteem psychology. For Adler the most important motivating force for behavior is a striving for superiority. A self-esteem theory of deviance was developed with the underlying proposition being that low self-esteem is the basic psychodynamic mechanism underlying deviance. For too many years self-esteem has been plagued by vagueness and fragmentation. Nominal definitions abound while real and operational definitions are still to be sought. The Steffenhagen-Burns model of self-esteem is an attempt to operationalize the concept of self-esteem. Self-esteem is defined on the basis of an operational model consisting of three egos comprised of nine elements and nine constructs. For each ego a self-esteem test of 27 items was constructed; each test dimensionalizes the ego into three constructs and three elements. It is postulated that self-esteem is a complex multi-faceted construct, and that individuals can be high and low in self-esteem simultaneously. (Author/ABL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED297204

SELF-ESTEEM: A MODEL

R. A. STEFFENHAGEN

CG 020977

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R A Steffenhagen

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, 95th, New York, NY, August 26-September 1, 1987.

Abstract

We have attempted to broaden and operationalize the concept of self-esteem. For too many years self-esteem has been plagued by vagueness and fragmentation. Nominal definitions abound while real and operational definitions are still to be sought. We have defined self-esteem on the basis of an operational model comprised of three egos comprised of nine elements and nine constructs. For each ego a self-esteem test of twenty-seven items was constructed; each test dimensionalizes the ego into three constructs and three elements. We postulate that self-esteem is a highly complex multi-faceted construct, and that individuals can be high and low in self-esteem simultaneously.

Self-esteem: A model

R.A. Steffenhagen

William James, (1890, 1892) may be thought of as the founding father of self psychology. His formula of pretensions over success equals self-esteem may be viewed as an attitudinal approach. We see ourselves in terms of how we actually perceive ourself in relationship to how we should like to see ourselves. In 1938 Robert K. Merton developed one of the most important theories of deviance in the field of sociology, anomie theory. This particular theory is based on a perceived disjunction between means and ends i.e. we accept the cultural goals but the cultural means are disparately provided thus individuals who are not provided with institutional means may resort to deviant means.

Another major theoretical development came out of the psycho analytic school of Freud. Freud was concerned with the development of the ego and perceived the self as comprised of the id, ego and super ego. Out of the psychoanalytic movement came work of Alfred Adler. It is our contention that Adler's Individual Psychology is actuality a self-esteem psychology. For Adler the most important motivating force for behavior is a striving for superiority. In 1977 the author published a position paper entitled "Toward self-esteem theory of drug dependence: A position paper," and in 1978 he published an article "An Adlerian approach toward a self-esteem theory of deviance: A drug abuse model." From the author's empiric work in the area of drug abuse, he became concerned with the underlying etiology of drug abuse. From his work in Adlerian psychology he developed a self-esteem theory of deviance, with the underlying proposition being: low self-esteem is the basic psycho-dynamic mechanism underlying deviance. Deviance is a compensatory mechanism for protecting a fragile self-esteem, and the

choice of compensatory mechanism is a result of one's developmental process and social milieu.

Following the development of the self-esteem theory of deviance the author became concerned with developing a model of self-esteem which can be used in research and therapy. The resultant model is the product of this endeavor.

The Steffenhagen-Burns model of self-esteem is an attempt to operationalize the concept of self-esteem. For too many years self-esteem has been plagued with vagueness and fragmentation. There are innumerable nominal definitions of self-esteem ranging from attitudinal, personality, psychological response, etc. The model presented in Figure 1 will be discussed briefly. The model consists of three egos. The first is referred to as the World Immersed Ego, the second the Transcendental Ego and the third the Epoche Performing Ego or Ego Strength. This derives in part from the work of Marvin Farber in Phenomenology.

Ego I, the World Immersed Ego, is a material situational ego. This ego is particularly important in secular industrialized societies. It is comprised of two pyramids, super-imposed to create a Star of David. Material components are self-concept, a cognitive evaluation of oneself, self-image, one's evaluation of his body, his physique, and social concept, one's assessment of his social performance. The situational elements are comprised of status, courage and flexibility. One cannot develop a good self-esteem without the attainment of an adequate status position within his social milieu. These will be discussed in detail in the paper.

The second ego the Transcendental Ego is comprised of the transcendental components of mind, body and spirit. We derive these from

the philosophical differences between the East and the West. In the West we still function within the Cartesian dichotomy of mind and body and in the East the dichotomy between mind and spirit. This differentiation is largely responsible for the lack of understanding between Eastern and Western philosophy. It is our contention that in order to achieve a well integrated personality we need an integration of mind, body and spirit. The mind, body and spirit is somewhat similar to self-concept, self-image and social-concept but on a more abstract level of perception. The construct elements, success, encouragement and support have been derived from the educational literature. We find that in the field of education, success, encouragement and support are three important concepts considered for the development of good self-esteem. We help students develop self-esteem by providing success, encouragement and support.

Our third ego the Epoche Performing Ego, we have labeled Ego Strength. It is comprised of self-awareness components which have been derived from Adlerian theory. It is our contention that within the Adlerian paradigm, goal orientation (striving for superiority) degree of activity, (one's energy level), and social interest are Adler's three most important concepts for an understanding of self-esteem. The integration elements are comprised of perception, creativity and adaption. These latter three are derived from a phenomenological orientation, we perceive behavior as resulting from one's interpretation of the stimulus not the stimulus. The emphasis is upon subjectivity rather then objectivity. Physical phenomenon exist nominally and intentionally whereas psyclical phenomena exist actually and intentionally and it is this distinction which is important in the development of the integration elements.

For each model we have created an individual self-esteem test to assess one's self-esteem at each level. It is our contention that when ego strength is high, Ego III, Egos' I and II will be more highly correlated. Each test consists of twenty-seven questions, a three by three matrix sub-dividing each ego into three separate components; Ego I, mental, physical and social. Each test has good test, re-test reliability. Further, Test 1 has been used by students at The University of Vermont and they found that Test 1 differentiates the three levels of mental, physical and social. Two different sets of students worked with this test with college jocks and found the jocks had higher self-esteem than the non-jocks and as expected, male jocks were higher in body image. Another set of students worked with jocks and non-jocks but controlled for sex and also found that women athletes had higher self-esteem than non-women athletes but were higher in the area of social concept.

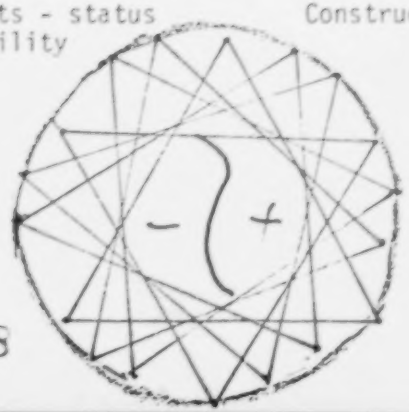
It is our contention that this model will have both research and therapeutic value. We contend that self-esteem is not uni-dimensional and that any attempt to deal with it as such is doomed to failure.

In 1983 Steffenhagen defined self-esteem as the "totality of the individuals perception of himself, including self-image (physical), self-concept (mental) and social concept (cultural). We now have broadened our definition to include each of the three models - self-esteem is the totality of the integration of three egos, a perception of one's self comprised of nine constructs and nine elements.

Steffenhagen and Burns have a book in press with Praeger, The social dynamics of self-esteem: Theory to therapy, projected publication May 1987.

Figure I

Ego I	Ego II	Ego III
World Immersed Ego Material / Situational	Transcendental Ego Transcendental / Construct	Epoche-Performing Ego Strength
Self Concept (mental)	Body	Goal Orientation
Status / Courage / Self Image / Social Concept	Success / Encouragement / Mind / Spirit	Perception / Creativity / Social Interest / Degree of Activity
Flexibility	Support	Adaption
Material components -self concept self image, social concept Situational elements - status courage, flexibility	Transcendental components - mind body, spirit Construct elements - success	Self awareness components - goal orientation, degree of activity, social interest Integration elements - perception, creativity, adaption



= Integrated Personality

Bibliography

James, W. Principles of Psychology. Vol. 1 & 2. New York: Henry Holt, 1890, 1893.

Merton, R. K. Social structure and anomie. American Sociological Review, October 1938, 3: 672-682.

Steffenhagen, R. A. Toward a self-esteem theory of drug dependence: A position paper. Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education, Vol. 22, No. 2, 1977.

Steffenhagen, R. A. An Adlerian approach toward a self-esteem theory of deviance: A drug abuse model. Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education, Vol. 24, No. 1, 1978.

Steffenhagen, R. A. and Jeff D. Burns. The Social Dynamics of Self-esteem: Theory to Therapy. New York: Praeger, 1987.